

Biography of The Late

Reverend Leonard Leland Hester



From the small town of Waxachachie, Texas, to life in Oakland, a large metropolitan city in California, Leonard Leland Hester rose to become one of the most successful and influential ministers in the area.

Reverend Hester was the son of a Methodist minister. He attended Prairie View College, Arizona State College and Berkeley Baptist Divinity School.

He was ordained a Minister of the Gospel in 1949. He served as choir director at the First Institutional Baptist Church in Phoenix, Arizona and Evergreen Baptist Church in Oakland, California.

He married Parthenia Strickling and moved to the Bay Area in 1950. Eight children—Joyce, Larry, Leonard Jr., Janice, Earnest, Jenell, Michael and Mark—were born to the couple.

He organized the New Light Baptist Church in 1954.

Reverend Hester became very active in the religious arena. He served as president of the Mt. Zion District Sunday School and Baptist Training Union, program chairman of the Baptist Ministers Union, a member of the National Baptist Sunday School and B.T.U. Congress of America and the National Baptist Convention. He was also a member of the International Masonic Lodge.

During his ministry, the road was sometimes rocky, but Reverend Hester proceeded to press onward, realizing that God had given him a special destiny.

The church was relocated from Oakland to Berkeley. It was there that the church prospered spiritually and rapidly increasing in number. The choir received several awards as the best choir in the Bay Area. He was radio pastor to thousands over KRE (every Sunday evening).

At approximately 1:00 a.m., on November 2, 1985, Reverend Hester went home to be with the Lord.

"Though the Worker is Gone, His Works Go On."